THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) As per available information there were 86 iron-ore mines in operation in Orissa during the year 2006-07. The estimated resources of iron-ore in Orissa are about 4761 million tonnes as on 1.4.2005.

(b) As per information available with Indian Bureau of Mines, the total production of iron-ore in Orissa during the year 2006-07 (provisional) was 63095 thousand tonnes which was utilised both for domestic and export purposes. Details of utilisation of iron-ore produced in the State are not centrally maintained.

(c) to (e) As per available information, the total resources of iron-ore in Khandadhar area are placed at 250.85 million as on 1.4.2005 of which 174.05 million tonnes are under free hold category and 76.8 million tonnes are under leasehold. So far 2 mining leases have been granted in favour of M/s OMC Ltd. in Khandadhar area.

Minority communities in the country

†1778. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of minority communities in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether percentage of growth of population of minority communities is at par with the growth in total population in the country; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act 1992. Details of religious minorities including percentage growth of population are available in the "Census of India 2001—The First Report on Religion Data" published by Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India and also on the website *www.censusindia.gov.in*. The growth rate during 1991—2001 is variable.

Minority community Below Poverty Line

1779. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the number of Muslims, minority community is rapidly increasing towards Below Poverty Line in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such increase during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Government to bring this minority community above the poverty line and also upto the middle class persons; and

(d) the financial assistance provided/expected to be provided to the poor minority community, for their development and improvement and by when?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (d) Planning Commission estimates the incidence of poverty at National and State level from the large

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

sample survey on household consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. Based on this, the percentage of population living below the poverty line for the minorities has been estimated for the year 1999-2000. The corresponding estimate of the number of persons living below the poverty line is not available.

Government is committed to ensuring the welfare of the minorities. The Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities is a major step in this direction. The following schemes have been approved/are being implemented for the welfare of the minorities:—

(i) Merit-cum-means based scholarship for technical and professional courses at undergraduate and post-graduate level,

(ii) Post-matric scholarship scheme,

(iii) Pre-matric scholarship scheme,

(iv) Free coaching and allied scheme,

(v) Schemes of Maulana Azad Education Foundation,

(vi) Schemes of National Minorities Development Corporation.

A sum of Rs. 1,000 crore has been proposed in the budget 2008-09 for these schemes.

Status of minorities

1780. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to bring 103rd Constitutional amendment seeking State-wise minority status, rather than national status, of minorities in the country;

(b) if so, the rationale behind this amendment;

(c) whether this amendment is in violation of article 25-30 of the Constitution providing protection to religious minorities;

(d) if so, the reasons for bringing this amendment;

(e) whether, after this amendment, some minority communities are likely to lose their minority status in their respective States and denial of the benefit to them; and

(f) if so, the steps taken or being taken by Government to ensure the protection of rights of minorities?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (f) The Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Bill to confer constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December, 2004. The Bill includes a definition of 'minority'. The recommendations of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment regarding the Bill have considered but some other related issues are still under examination.